

Proposed Veterans Care Center Hampton Roads

The Commonwealth of Virginia plans to construct a veterans care center of up to 240 beds in the Hampton Roads area. This paper provides background information, briefly describes the planned veterans care center, and lists minimum site requirements. It outlines the process by which interested parties may nominate a site for consideration, describes the criteria and timeframe for evaluating potential sites, and explains how, when, and by whom a final decision will be made on a site.

Background

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) operates veterans care centers – in Richmond and Roanoke – that provide long-term care and short-term rehabilitation to Virginia’s veterans. Additional care centers are planned for Hampton Roads (discussed in this paper) and Northern Virginia.

Of Virginia’s 823,000 veterans, approximately 276,184 are age 65 or older, and of the veterans age 65+, 58,073 live in the Hampton Roads planning district. The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) predicts the number of Virginia veterans age 65+ will increase by 14% between 2012 and 2027; however, the number of veterans age 65+ in Hampton Roads will increase by 25%.

Given the significant growth of veterans age 65+ predicted in the Hampton Roads planning district and the fact that the two existing care centers serve western and central Virginia, but not the eastern part of the state, DVS plans to build and operate a third care center in the Hampton Roads planning district.

Veterans care centers are built using federal grant funding (65% of project costs) and state funds (35% of project costs). The Virginia General Assembly has committed to funding the state share of construction costs, contingent upon receipt of federal grant funding.

The USDVA releases annually a priority list that determines which projects will be funded in a given federal fiscal year (FFY). In general, repairs to or renovations of current facilities are ranked ahead of new construction projects. Projects are further ranked by the date of application for federal grant funding. Because the federal grant funds are finite, new construction projects may remain on the priority list for several years before being funded by the USDVA.

The planned Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center (HRVCC) is the highest ranked new construction project on the USDVA priority list; but, this is no guarantee that funding will be received in FFY13. The Commonwealth of Virginia must hold clear title to the property before federal grant funding will be awarded.

Description of planned veterans care center

The planned HRVCC represents a long-term commitment on the part of the Commonwealth of Virginia. DVS anticipates that this facility will be Virginia's flagship veterans care center. The HRVCC will provide long-term care, including Alzheimer's/dementia care, and short-term rehabilitation. The design will be based on state-of-the-art concepts in care center design, and it will be a green building, meaning there will be little or no pollution and minimal medical waste. The care center will have an annual budget of \$20+ million and will bring 400 to 500 new jobs to Hampton Roads.

The Hampton Roads care center will be based on a new concept used by the USDVA. This concept, described as *small house*, divides the nursing home into smaller household clusters of 10-12 rooms with decentralized dining facilities, day rooms, and other common areas.

After reaching full occupancy, care centers are self sufficient, operating on revenue from the USDVA per diem, Medicare, Medicaid, and private pay. Although operated by the state and staffed by state employees, the care center operates much like a private business.

In addition to bringing a significant construction project to the Hampton Roads planning district and several hundred new jobs once the center opens, DVS estimates that annually the Hampton Roads care center will impact the local economy with approximately \$16 million in salary and \$4 million in non-salary expenditures.

Minimum site requirements

DVS seeks a site that meets the following criteria:

- Desired: 25+ acres for a one-story, 240-bed facility;
- Minimum: 15 acres for a two to three-story, 240-bed facility;
- 200 parking spaces;
- Land must be donated to the Commonwealth (budget does not include funding for land purchase). Commonwealth must hold title to land before federal grant funds will be awarded.

Other key considerations include:

- Ease of patient evacuation (hurricanes, natural disaster, etc.);
- Ease of truck access for delivery of supplies, food, etc.;
- Access to public utilities;
- Safety and security.

Site identification/nomination

DVS invites interested parties/localities in Hampton Roads to nominate sites for consideration by DVS for the planned HRVCC. Information on proposed sites should be submitted no later than July 31 to:

Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Attn: Deputy Commissioner Bill Janis
Pocahontas Building, 6th Floor, West Wing
900 E. Main Street
Richmond VA 23219

Site Evaluation Process

DVS will partner with an architecture and engineering (A&E) firm to review proposed sites. Resources and time permitting, an evaluation will be made of all viable sites. Interested parties may be required to bear all or part of the costs of the site evaluation, estimated at \$25,000 per site. Detailed evaluation criteria will include factors such as:

1. Location, accessibility, and community context;
2. Size/site boundaries, shape, prior use, and adjacent land use;
3. Topography, environmental, soils, and drainage patterns;
4. Natural site features, man-made site features, site lines, and view sheds;
5. Zoning status and legal impacts;
6. Availability of utilities, traffic/roads – internal and external, and goods/services;
7. Emergency response, safety, and security.

The site evaluation process is expected to take three months, until approximately the end of October.

Site Selection Process

A review panel led by the Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Services will evaluate study results. Panel members will include DVS staff; the Chairman and representatives of the Board of Veterans Services; the Chair or a representative of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations; and representatives of other organizations and agencies as may be required.

The review panel will present its recommendations to the Commissioner of Veterans Services for review and the final decision, which will be made by mid-November, 2012. All parties will be notified of the selected site.

Timeline (all dates 2012)

1. By July 31: interested parties nominate sites for consideration;
2. August 1 – October 31: site evaluations;
3. November 1 – 16: site selection;
4. November 19: all parties notified of site selection decision.

For further information

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